

Glah Ubooki's Strange & Wonderous Imports

Introduction

Welcome to the shop, friend. Do I have anything that might interest you? A trinket from the debris of Alderaan? A glove once worn by Lord Vader himself? No, I can see such antiques don't interest a man of the world like yourself. What you need is that rare something that gives you an edge over your competitors. Something that will make your freighter faster than the Millennium Falcon herself. Well, come in then, friend, I have just the thing... a device procured from an old Imperial wreck. Nothing stolen I guarantee you, but finders are keepers you know.

What? You've seen me before? In Mos Eisley? I hardly think so. I haven't left Coruscant in years. You must be mistaking me for another Bimm. Yes, I know most Bimms wear yellow spun cloth rather than this drab attire I have chosen, but we can't all be wealthy now, can we friend? Now, about that artifact you were interested in...

Glah Ubooki is a Bimm from the planet Bimmisaari. A decade or so



ago, Glah discovered the wreckage of an Imperial R&D vessel in the asaari woods near his native lands. There were no survivors, but the short adventurer decided to pluck through the wreckage before the Empire's salvage vessels arrived. What he found within were prototype weapons and equipment the Imperial technicians were devising to use against the then fledgling Rebellion. Glah ran back to his home, grabbed seven of his brothers, and raced back to the ship. For three hours the identical siblings carried off the prototypes and any other usable equipment they could find.

The following day, the Bimms took their find to the swelling markets of Glastro, the closest major city. Fortunately for them, a smuggler working for the Rebellion realized the wares for what they were and paid Glah and his brothers an enormous sum for the entire lot. The Bimms lived well for the next several months, but it was obvious the fortune wouldn't last forever. One night, while the eight brothers shared a bottle of the best Glastroan wine, Glah proposed a plan. They would pool their money, buy a ship, and explore the local systems for rare finds such as the one they had just sold. It was a little silly to think that such treasures would come their way again, but the optimistic nature of the Bimms and the influence of the Glastroan wine encouraged them to try. Before they could think better of it, the eight used the last of their money to buy a ship and enough fuel to roam their system on their naive scavenger hunt.

The brothers' success was impossible, but it happened. A major key to their luck was the way the Empire and the Rebellion carried out their war near Bimmisaari. Neither side had many personnel in the area, so bombings, interplanetary missiles, and even orbital ship-to-ground attacks were common. This left many facilities wide open for several hours, allowing the watchful Ubookis to steal in and out with thousands of credits worth of data, secrets, equipment, and any other valuables that weren't welded down. A few weeks later, the brothers

would take their wares to markets far away from the attack sites and make fortunes selling it to the other side, or occasionally, back to the very group they had stolen it from!

At the market, whichever brother was making the sale at the time would introduce himself as Glah Ubooki and wear his sibling's clothes. None of the others would ever let themselves be seen at the market together. That way, any Imperials or bounty hunters who had figured out their scheme would be chasing a single Bimm instead of the whole group of eight. Their ruse saved their business and their lives on more than one occasion.

In time, smugglers, explorers, or even other pirates began to bring "Glah" the strange things they had found. Weapons and armor were abundant until and just after the Battle of Endor, but since then, strange and alien artifacts have become the Ubooki's specialty. When the Ubookis had amassed a great quantity of strange and wondrous devices, the brothers decided to settle on Bimmisaari and open up a permanent store in Glastro.

The business was so successful that the other brothers quickly took a portion of their stock and headed off to other planets to open their own stores. Their private joke of the "eight Glahs" stuck, and now every one of them says that he is Glah Ubooki. When someone asks who the Bimm on the last world is, the trader shrugs his shoulders and says that there are no other shops like his. To further the joke, "Glah" pretends to know all of his customers, even though he may have never seen them before. This way, it seems that the Glah remembers anyone that shopped at his other location, even though he swears that there is no such place!

Every year or so, the 18 Bimm brothers who now create this illusion get together on Bimmisaari and throw a week-long party celebrating their success and the great joke they have pulled on the known worlds. And of course, the Glastroan wine flows freely!

All "Glahs" dress the same while working their store. They wear a brown robe and a tattered beige head-wrap with a dark stain just over the left eye. This is a simple grease mark that all the Ubookis have adopted to further enhance the illusion that they are the same individual on 18 different worlds.

Bimms are born in litters of one sex, so all the Ubooki children of this litter are males, and all look enough alike so that non-Bimms cannot tell the difference. Another Bimm might be able to detect a difference, but even then he couldn't be absolutely sure.

Glah Ubooki's Strange & Wondrous Imports

"Glah" keeps hundreds of useless and overpriced trinkets adorning the walls and glass displays of "his" dimly lit store. This keeps casual browsers from knowing his true business while allowing scrutinizing buyers to look over his wondrous merchandise hidden amongst the gaudy baubles and junk. Also, the cluttered and ever-changing junk keeps each of the 18 shops looking similar without having to actually coordinate what baubles are hanging in any particular spot.

The newest treasures hidden among "Glah's" wares area are the exotic Jubba bird, a prototype neural interface device, and the Jodakan needler crab.

Jubba Bird

Cost: 4,000 credits

Quantity: 1 each in 3 different shops

There are few splashes of color in the dark swamps of Dagobah -- the Jubba bird is a rare and spectacular exception. The unique ability of the creature is derived from its quiet humming, eerie whistling, and soothing melodies. Its low songs soothe the nerves of all but the most foul-tempered creatures or individuals. "Glah" has tried to make a recording of the Jubba's song but the audio files didn't seem to carry the same effect as the genuine article. "Glah" believes that the bird's power may be a slight manifestation of the Force. Perhaps that's why the animal must be happy and healthy for its soothing song to work its magic. He also speculates that the power is a highly advanced defense mechanism, possibly even evolved from its close proximity to a certain green-skinned Jedi Master from its home world.



Whenever a Jubba bird sings it acts as the "affect mind" power. The song's "message" is always to influence those around it to a passive attitude. This is an easy task as long as the target is only contemplating an act of violence. If those affected were already committed to hostility, the bird's song would have little effect.

If the Jubba bird isn't happy, it won't sing. This means that a new owner must provide it with a suitable cage or environment at least three meters tall by four meters wide on a side. Only when the bird has ample room to fly and preen its one meter wingspan will it remain content. The open interior of a spaceship is usually room enough. Of course, it must also be fed, which can often present a greater challenge than providing it with space.

Despite their calming powers, Jubba birds don't practice what they preach. They are hunters and must catch their prey themselves before they will feed. Their usual diet consists of snakes or common rodents. For this reason, the owners of the bird will have to release the prey-animal into the environment (such as the hold of their ship), and allow the Jubba to hunt, catch, and consume the meal on its own. A few will almost always get away, so the unfortunate ship or grounds used for feeding will often become overrun with rodents and other vermin. It is obviously much better to keep one of these rare creatures in an outside environment.

Jubba birds are deceptively intelligent as well. Most owners will think that the creature is a beautiful and magnificent animal but with no real capacity for learning. This isn't quite true and seems to be a conscious decision on the Jubba's part -- perhaps because it is stubborn and doesn't wish to be manipulated. As long as it "pretends" to be "dumb," its master won't think that he can train and control it at will. If the Jubba is kept very happy with plenty of space to fly, lots of prey to eat, and constant attention, it may reveal some of its higher intelligence to its owner. In this case, the Jubba can be a loyal and valuable companion often capable of pointing out a stranger's true motivations, seeking out a particular person or well-known thing, or most importantly singing its magical song on command.

Imperial Neural Interface Device

Cost: 9,000 credits

Quantity: 1 each in 4 different shops

In the early phases of the Rebellion, the Empire experimented with linking TIE pilots to their craft via neural implants. The theory was that they could simply "think" their commands to the ship and they would be translated and fed into the computer at lightning speed, thereby eliminating the delay of manual input devices. The project was abandoned when it was discovered that interfacing with the ship's computers was simply too overwhelming for most pilot's minds. Scientists were working on a "sorting" program that could filter out extraneous data when disaster struck. Their R&D vessel was but one of a large convoy of support craft in the rear of an Imperial fleet. Rebel planners wanted to disrupt these support services and the lightly armored vessels were quickly spinning out of control or were turned into drifting derelicts. In the confusion, the R&D vessel was lost until a group of smugglers robbed the floating tomb some months later. Most of the goods they didn't keep wound up in "Glah's" shops throughout the galaxy.

A neural interface device is wired into the standard control systems of any starship. Four long wires ending in gelatinous diodes are placed on the pilot's temples and just below the ears. After some initialization, the user can issue commands to his ship simply by thought.

Unfortunately, most ship computers keep track of so many millions of variables, vectors, and power management routines that only the most disciplined minds can sift through the massive amount of data and discern what is truly important. Obviously, the more the computer has to keep up with, the harder this becomes. It is nearly impossible to interface with anything larger than a freighter. Rumors have circulated for ages that one of the Empire's remaining Star Destroyers is controlled by a withered savant equipped with such a machine, but the tales are doubtful at best.

Jodakan Needler Crab

Cost: 250 credits

Quantity: 1 in each shop

The vast seas of Jodaka produce many strange creatures, though none are as deceptively deadly as the Jodakan needler crab. This strange crustacean looks much like the spider crabs of other worlds. The needler crab,



however, lives on the rocky reefs that jut above Jodaka's rough seas and feeds off the gulls that, in turn, try to feed off it.

The most interesting thing about the needler crab is the way it catches its prey. A hollow tube lies just below the shell along the width of its back, so that the opening points outward just above its tiny eyes. Within this tube the crab secretes a paralyzing poison that solidifies into a type of dart. When a gull or other target gets within two meters, the crab fires its projectile. The poison acts quickly and the hungry crab then scampers over to feed on its fallen prey.

A needler crab can be induced to fire its biotic needle. This is done by tapping it on the back of the shell just above the air sacks that provide the barb's propulsion.

There are a few steps an owner must take to keep his "weapon" alive. First, she must let it spend at least four hours per day in a saltwater environment such as an aquarium, and second, the crab must be fed at least one pound of meat per day. If a crab ever sees a winged creature of any sort within 25 meters, it will leap from its owner and rush to attack. Needler crabs never miss an opportunity to bring down a bird if they have a barb ready. This can prove embarrassing if the owner has just met with a flying sapient and the needler crab paralyzes him before the first hand-shake!

This originally appeared as a feature article in Star Wars Adventure Journal #1, published by West End Games in 1994. It was written by Shane Hensley with illustrations by Tim Eldred.